

US Army Conventional Forces in Gray Zone Conflict

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

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Gray zone conflict is a nascent term in the US Military lexicon. Some experts and analysts believe this concept is a new phenomenon of warfare which will shape the operational environment in the future; others view it as ageless and argue that it constitutes a rule of warfare, rather than an exception. As the patterns of modern conflict reshape societies' conceptions of warfare, the US Army must be prepared to meet every challenge. US Army leaders and planners must understand whether the operational environment has changed significantly and, if so, how might they employ the force they have to achieve a position of relative advantage in an operational environment that exhibits the characteristics of the gray zone.

This monograph addresses the ability of US Army conventional forces to successfully conduct operations in gray zone conflict. This study is divided into four sections. The introductory section defines the gray zone and describes its context and complexity in the modern operational environment. The second section addresses the applicability of the gray zone theory of warfare to existing US doctrine and compares this to the assigned missions of US Army conventional and Special Operations Forces. The third section explores the Dominican Republic Intervention of 1965 as an example of US Army conventional forces operating successfully in a gray zone conflict. The final section draws upon lessons learned and offers conventional force solutions to modern gray zone problems.

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Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AFB	Air Force Base
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
AUMF	Authorization for the Use of Military Force
CAM	Combined Arms Maneuver
CF	Conventional Forces
CJCS	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
DA Pam	Department of the Army Pamphlet
DEFCON	Defense (Readiness) Condition
DIME	Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic
DOMREP	Dominican Republic
DOTMLPF-P	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy
DRF	Division Ready Force
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GCC	Geographic Combatant Command
GNR	Government of National Reconstruction
IAPF	Inter-American Peace Force
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDAD	Internal Defense and Development
IW	Irregular Warfare
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JP	Joint Publication
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States

PRD	<i>Partido Revolucionario Dominicano</i> [Dominican Revolutionary Party]
RAF	Regionally Aligned Forces
ROAD	Reorganization Objectives Army Division
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SO	Special Operations
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
UCN	<i>Unión Cívica Nacional</i> [The National Civic Union]
US	United States
USFOR- DOMREP	United States Forces - Dominican Republic
USAF	United States Air Force
UW	Unconventional Warfare
WAS	Wide Area Security

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Introduction: The Context and Complexity of Gray Zone Conflict

This is another type of war, new in its intensity, ancient in its origin—war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins, war by ambush instead of by combat; by infiltration, instead of aggression, seeking victory by eroding and exhausting the enemy instead of engaging him It requires in those situations where we must counter it, and these are the kinds of challenges that will be before us in the next decade if freedom is to be saved, a whole new kind of strategy, a wholly different kind of force, and therefore a new and wholly different kind of military training.

—President John F. Kennedy, *Remarks at West Point, 1962*

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the United States of America emerged as the sole world superpower.¹ The dominance displayed by the US Military in the Gulf War earlier that year further established America’s superpower credentials. Soviet leaders and planners witnessed the destruction of their conventional military equipment in Iraq by superior American technology and war-fighting capability. While the Iraqi Army did not represent the model for Soviet war-fighting, the conflict impressed upon Soviet leaders and planners the extent of America’s conventional battlefield dominance.² They concluded that America’s ability to forge alliances and win in a joint, multi-national war was cause for concern and required military reform to prepare their army for future warfare.³

Though the Soviet Union and its army no longer exist, the lessons they learned are not lost. The United States’ competitors and adversaries continually seek relative advantage over US forces to advance their agendas, but lack the conventional parity to realize their disparate goals. For many nations, the use of conventional military force is not a viable method of challenging American interests; consequently, these competitors employ their resources asymmetrically to combat US

¹ Anuarbek Alimzhanov, *Declaration on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States*. no. 142-N, December 26, 1991, accessed September 18, 2016, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Declaration_no._142-N_of_the_Soviet_of_the_Republics_of_the_Supreme_Soviet_of_the_USSR.

² Gilberto Villahermosa, “Desert Storm: The Soviet View” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office Publications, 2005), 1, accessed October 1, 2016, <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/rs-storm.htm>.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

interests in a manner for which the United States is least prepared.⁴ This illustrates the practical usefulness of Sun Tzu's aphorism, "to avoid what is strong, and strike at what is weak."⁵

The United States possesses considerable advantages in conventional war: national resources, national performance, and military capability.⁶ America's adversaries usually avoid these strengths and seek parity through other means. Less powerful nations increase their relative strength against a greater power by attacking along multiple, varied lines of effort to erode its supremacy and exhaust its resources. President Kennedy described the danger of this type of warfare, which takes place in what some now call the "Gray Zone," in his 1962 address to the cadets of the United States Military Academy.⁷

Gray zone conflict is a new term in the US Military lexicon. Though no doctrinal or dictionary definition yet exists, various commentators have established a shared understanding of its nature.⁸ Gray zone conflict involves activities directed toward the accomplishment of ends by

⁴ The Heritage Foundation, *2016 Index of U.S. Military Strength*, accessed October 2, 2016, <http://index.heritage.org/military/2016/assessments/>.

⁵ Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1994), 45.

⁶ "National power can be defined simply as the capacity of a country to pursue strategic goals through purposeful action. This view of national power suggests two distinct but related dimensions of capacity: an external dimension, which consists of a nation's capacity to affect the global environment through its economic, political, and military potential, and an internal dimension, which consists of a nation's capacity to transform the resources of its society into 'actionable knowledge' that produces the best civilian and military technologies possible. Any effort at creating a useful national power profile must incorporate variables that capture these two dimensions." Ashley J. Tellis, Christopher Layne, and Janice L. Bially, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age: Analyst's Handbook* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2001): 1-4, 39, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://site.ebrary.com/lumen.cgscarl.com/lib/carl/reader.action?docID=2002137&ppg=2>.

⁷ John F. Kennedy, "Remarks at West Point to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy," Presidential address, West Point, NY, June 6, 1962, accessed September 11, 2016, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=8695>; Votel, Joseph L. "Statement to the House Armed Services Committee: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities," 114th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 2015, 7, accessed October 2, 2016, https://fas.org/irp/congress/2015_hr/031815votel.pdf.

⁸ Nathan P. Freier, et al., "Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone, A Report Sponsored by the Army Capabilities Integration Center in Coordination with Joint Staff J-39/Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment Branch" (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2016): 4; Philip Kapusta, "The Gray Zone," *Special Warfare* 28, no. 4 (October-December 2015): 20; Joseph L. Votel, "Statement to the House Armed Services Committee: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities," Washington, DC (March 18, 2015): 7.

utilizing all methods short of declared war. On the peace-war spectrum, gray zone conflict falls between peace and the “red lines” established by each nation or military alliance to define conditions that justify going to war.⁹ Operating in this environment allows a less powerful opponent to achieve its objective(s) without provoking its target into an undesirable or unwinnable war.

Some analysts and military experts believe the gray zone concept is a new phenomenon of warfare that will shape the operational environment in the future; others view it as ageless and argue that it constitutes a rule of warfare rather than an exception.¹⁰ Regardless which view is correct, gray zone conflict is as old as warfare itself and occurs more often. Conventional wars punctuate history, but gray zone competition and conflicts saturate it.¹¹

Though the term “gray zone conflict” is new, it bears similarity to other relevant concepts of war and warfare. These concepts include asymmetric warfare, political warfare, ambiguous warfare, irregular warfare, hybrid warfare, and military operations other than war.¹² The amalgamation of these methods of warfare into one expansive category demonstrates the complexity inherent in all conflict. Not every war fits neatly into one category; rather, each war

⁹ “Gray zone conflict is best understood as activity that is coercive and aggressive in nature, but that is deliberately designed to remain below the threshold of conventional military conflict and open interstate war. Gray zone approaches are mostly the province of revisionist powers—those actors that seek to modify some aspect of the existing international environment—and the goal is to reap gains, whether territorial or otherwise, that are normally associated with victory in war. Yet gray zone approaches are meant to achieve those gains without escalating to overt warfare, without crossing established red-lines, and thus without exposing the practitioner the penalties and risks that such escalation might bring.” Hal Brands, *Paradoxes of the Gray Zone* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2016): 1, accessed November 10, 2016, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2737593.

¹⁰ For examples of support and opposition to the gray zone concept see Adam Elkus, “50 Shades of Gray: Why the Gray Wars Concept Lacks Strategic Sense,” *War on the Rocks*, December 15, 2015, accessed November 25, 2016, <http://warontherocks.com/2015/12/50-shades-of-gray-why-the-gray-wars-concept-lacks-strategic-sense/>; John Knefel, “The ‘Gray Zone’ Is the Future of War: Ongoing, Low-Level, and Undeclared,” *Inverse*, accessed November 25, 2016, <https://www.inverse.com/article/8838-the-gray-zone-is-the-future-of-war-ongoing-low-level-and-undeclared>.

¹¹ Kapusta, “The Gray Zone,” 20-21.

¹² Christopher Paul, “Confessions of a Hybrid Warfare Skeptic: What Might Really Be Interesting but Hidden Within the Various Conceptions of Gray Zone Conflict, Ambiguous Warfare, Political Warfare, and Their ilk” *Small Wars Journal* (March, 2016): 1, accessed September 18, 2016, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/confessions-of-a-hybrid-warfare-skeptic>; Kapusta, “The Gray Zone,” 20.

expresses elements of several theories of war and warfare. Due to the complex, ambiguous, and emergent nature of this phenomenon, gray zone conflict should be described by its underlying characteristics and context—not defined as the sum of its parts.¹³

Context is important to the analysis of conflict. Participants in gray zone conflict may have different perceptions of their struggle that motivate them and influence their actions. An antagonist may wage a limited conflict, while the protagonist believes he faces an existential threat.¹⁴ These perceptions may run the full gamut of peace and war—making it more difficult to understand and respond to the situation. In the absence of a declaration of war and clearly defined objectives, the human aspects of individual perspective and the will to fight have greater influence on the nature and conduct of these conflicts.

The Problem

US government policy holds that the United States has participated in five conventional conflicts since 1915: World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Operation Desert Storm.¹⁵ These conflicts involved uniformed soldiers of nation states engaging in force-on-force battles. One or more of the belligerents in these conflicts publically announced their intentions by formal declaration of war, Congressional Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), or United Nations Security Council Resolution. During the same period, the United States deployed troops in fifty-seven additional instances that involved armed conflict.¹⁶ Some examples of these

¹³ “In short, there is no single template for gray zone challenges or challengers and, therefore, no one silver bullet to combat or counter them effectively. In the end, it is best to describe the gray zone in terms of what it is not than what it is. It is neither the routine peaceful interactions of textbook international relations nor the equally doctrinal challenge of major great power war. Specific challenges in it manifest as tough, complex, and often ambiguous combinations of forces, actors, methods, and effects.” Freier, “Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone,” 3-4.

¹⁴ Kapusta, “The Gray Zone,” 22.

¹⁵ Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed, “Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications,” *Congressional Research Service* (April 2014): 1-3, accessed October 01, 2016. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL31133.pdf>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-107.

undeclared, armed conflicts include interventions in the Dominican Republic (1965), Grenada (1983), Honduras (1988), Bosnia (1992 to 1996), and Libya (2011).¹⁷ This disparity demonstrates the prevalence of gray zone conflicts and reinforces the need for the US military to fight and win in these environments.¹⁸

The US Army trains, organizes, and equips itself to fight large-scale, conventional wars that pose an existential or significant threat to the nation or its interests.¹⁹ The tenets of simplification, reduction, and prescription are hallmarks of US military thought; these concepts, along with experience in war establish an American mindset that favors mass, offensive tactics, and the pursuit of short, decisive victories.²⁰ This way of thinking pervaded the Western mindset since the time of Frederick the Great and continues to hold sway despite increasing US Military involvement in irregular wars.²¹

Despite this mindset, the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan prove that decisive victory is not always possible and that achieving the nation's objectives may be prohibitively expensive and

¹⁷ Kapusta, "The Gray Zone," 20-21.

¹⁸ Michael J. Mazarr, "Mastering the Gray Zone" (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2004), 4.

¹⁹ The opinion among scholars varies regarding the proper balance of conventional and irregular war-fighting capabilities in the US Army. Despite this disagreement, most agree that the Modular Force concept offers a step in the right direction toward balancing the two concepts. For some examples, see Michael R. Melillo, "Outfitting a Big-War Military with Small-War Capabilities," *Parameters* (Autumn, 2006), accessed February 16, 2017, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/06autumn/melillo.htm>; Jeffrey Record, "Why the Strong Lose," *Parameters* (Winter 2005-6), accessed February 16, 2017, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/05winter/record.htm>; Policy; composition; organized peace establishment, Public Law 114-38, US Code 10 (2011), §3062; Charles T. Hagel, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, February 2014): vi, ix, xii, accessed February 16, 2017, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf.

²⁰ John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, eds. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 179.

²¹ Antulio J. Echevarria, "Toward an American Way of War" (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2004): v-vi; R. R. Palmer, "Frederick the Great, Guibert, Bülow: From Dynastic to National War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, eds. Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 108; Melillo, "Outfitting a Big-War Military with Small-War Capabilities," 22-23.

time consuming. While the US Army possesses a large and capable contingent of Special Operations Forces designed to fight irregular warfare, these elements cannot satisfy all requirements across the globe.²² Additionally, recent fiscal constraints and the reduction of the Army's force structure directly contributed to a lack of capability and readiness.²³ These factors limit the United States' available response options to a military crisis and weaken the credibility of the threat posed by the US Army as an instrument of national power.

Conversely, America's current and potential competitors, adversaries, and enemies have closed the gap considerably in other instruments of national power, particularly in the information domain. The availability of cheap and effective methods of communication through off-the-shelf information technologies allows state and non-state actors to promulgate their messages effectively and at little cost.²⁴ This newfound ability allows relatively weak actors to disseminate their narrative, change popular opinion, and garner support for their cause. While this is a simple method of challenging the status quo, it has the potential to frustrate military conventions and foster an environment unfavorable to military action.

To combat the growing complexity of armed conflict and gray zone competition, the US Army must explore new ways to utilize the force it has. US Army leaders may employ conventional forces to effect positive change across the entire spectrum of conflict, from the gray zone to theater-level wars. While the solution to any conflict is a whole-of-government approach, conventional forces may have opportunities for an expanded role in gray zone conflicts given the appropriate

²² Joseph L. Votel, Statement to the House Armed Services Committee: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, 114th Cong., 2nd sess., March 1, 2016, accessed October 30, 2016, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS26/20160301/104552/HHRG-114-AS26-Wstate-VotelJ-20160301.pdf>.

²³ Lawrence Kapp, et al., "How Big Should the Army Be? Considerations for Congress" (Congressional Research Service, September, 2016), 2-3, accessed October 01, 2016, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44612.pdf>.

²⁴ Arquilla, John, David Ronfeldt, and Michele Zanini, "Networks, Netwar, and Information Age Terrorism," *Strategic Appraisal: The Changing Role of Information in Warfare* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1999): 76-77, accessed October 02, 2016, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1016.html.

training, experience, and organization.²⁵ This monograph examines the suitability of conventional US Army forces to act outside their role in traditional warfare and achieve a position of relative advantage in an operational environment exhibiting the three characteristics of gray zone conflict. These characteristics are defined by Nathan P. Freier as, “hybridity, menace to defense and military convention, and profound and paralyzing risk-confusion.”²⁶

The Operational Environment

In 1993, R. James Woolsey was nominated for Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.²⁷ During his testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, he made a prophetic statement concerning the security environment facing the United States. Woolsey warned the Senate of the drastic changes brought by the defeat of the Soviet Union and the emergent threats that replaced them. He said, “Yes, we have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways the dragon was easier to keep track of.”²⁸ This statement accurately describes the United States’ current operational environment.

The 2015 *National Security Strategy* asserts that the modern operational environment is complex and situations of national concern may not lend themselves to “quick and easy fixes.”²⁹ Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations*; Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*; and other non-government sources support this sentiment.³⁰ One

²⁵ Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), i.

²⁶ “Traditional warfare is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states,” JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, x; for the three characteristics of gray zone conflict, see Freier, “Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone,” ix, 3-4.

²⁷ 25. *Cong. Rec.*, 103rd Cong., 1st sess., 1993. vol. 139, pt. 23: 423.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁹ Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), i.

³⁰ JP 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), II-1; Barack H. Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), ii; Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 1-1 -

contemporary example best illustrates the context of gray zone conflict: the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea in 2014. This example challenges the paradigms of war and peace and possesses the three elements of gray zone conflict.

The Russian Federation in Ukraine

On March 22, 2014, the Russian Federation formally annexed Crimea from Ukraine. This action proved a complex problem for Ukraine and other world powers that favored the pre-conflict status quo. The annexation resulted from the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution and subsequent military intervention by the Russian Federation.³¹

In this conflict, Russia directly and indirectly supported revolutionary actors in the Crimean Peninsula to garner support for annexation, seize key terrain, and frustrate the response of the Ukrainian Government. The Russian Government formed a hybrid force consisting of Russian Armed Forces, non-uniformed soldiers (colloquially referred to as "little green men" by reporters in Ukraine), partisan fighters, criminals, and ethnic Russian supporters to create confusion and encourage inaction from the leaders of the Ukrainian Government.³² By timing this action during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia increased the effectiveness of the plan.³³ While the

1-2; Huba Wass de Czege, "Systemic Operational Design: Learning and Adapting in Complex Missions," *Military Review* 89, no. 1 (January-February 2009): 2, accessed February 16, 2017, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20090228_art004.pdf.

³¹ Roy Allison, "Russian 'Deniable' Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules," *International Affairs* 90, no. 6 (November, 2014): 1255-56.

³² Vitaly Shevchenko, "'Little Green Men' or 'Russian Invaders'?", *BBC News*, March 11, 2014, accessed October 02, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26532154>; Giles, Keir, "Russia's 'New' Tools for Confronting the West Continuity and Innovation in Moscow's Exercise of Power," *Russia and Eurasia Programme* (March, 2016): 6-7, accessed October 02, 2016, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-03-21-russias-new-tools-giles-embargoed2.pdf?dm_t=0,0,0,0.

³³ Damien Sharkov, "Ukraine Wary of Russian Escalation in Olympic Shadow," *Newsweek*, August 12, 2016, accessed October 3, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/ukraine-concerned-putins-olympic-war-games-489880>.

world was distracted by the global spectacle, Russian forces seized Simferopol Airport and other locations containing key infrastructure while President Putin denied their presence in the region.³⁴

After the successful annexation of Crimea, ethnic Russian partisans commenced fighting in Donetsk and Luhansk provinces to achieve autonomy.³⁵ Ukrainian Armed Forces responded to this threat with military force; this prompted regular Russian Armed Forces to invade eastern Ukraine and engage Ukrainian Forces to protect the ethnic Russian population. Fighting ceased on February 12, 2015 with the signing of the Minsk II protocol.³⁶

Russia achieved its objectives through a gray zone strategy. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* addresses this action directly:

Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and use of conventional and unconventional land forces in Ukraine suggest that Russia is determined to expand its territory and assert its power on the Eurasian landmass. Russia deployed and integrated a range of diplomatic, information, military, and economic means to conduct what some analysts have described as “non-linear” operations. Russia conducted operations to pursue its war aims below the threshold that would elicit a concerted North Atlantic Treaty Organization response.³⁷

Neither Ukraine nor Russia declared war on the other. Instead, a hybrid Russian-backed force achieved limited goals at a minimal cost, the nature of the conflict challenged Ukraine’s concept of defense and military convention, and a seemingly unwinnable situation forced the Ukrainian government to capitulate.

³⁴ Agence France-Presse, “Thousands of Russian Soldiers Sent to Ukraine, Say Rights Groups,” *The Guardian*, September 1, 2014, accessed October 02, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/01/russian-soldiers-ukraine-rights-groups>.

³⁵ Allison, “Russian ‘Deniable’ Intervention in Ukraine,” 1256.

³⁶ Keir Giles, “Russia’s ‘New’ Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow’s Exercise of Power,” *Russia and Eurasia Programme* (March, 2016): 2, 5, accessed October 02, 2016, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/research/2016-03-21-russias-new-tools-giles-embargoed2.pdf?dm_t=0,0,0,0,0.

³⁷ US Army Training and Doctrine Command, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 13.

Methodology

Complementing the three characteristics of gray zone conflict published in the 2016 report from the US Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute described above, one often sees hybridity referred to with the term "hybrid threat."³⁸ As described in Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*,

A hybrid threat is the diverse and dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, terrorist forces, criminal elements, or a combination of these forces and elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects. Hybrid threats may involve nation-state adversaries that employ protracted forms of warfare, possibly using proxy forces to coerce and intimidate, or nonstate actors using operational concepts and high-end capabilities traditionally associated with nation-states.³⁹

The synergistic effect of multiple agencies, elements, and forces acting in concert creates a complex environment with equally complex problems and produces a stronger outcome than would be expected from each individual part.

The gray zone's "menace to defense and military convention," highlights the ability of gray zone actors to frustrate the capabilities of their object. Actors employing gray zone strategies do not solely rely on traditional models of military operations. Instead, adversaries reduce the role of the military instrument or use it in concert with other instruments of national power. Gray zone actors will not provide their adversary with a decisive battle nor will they operate along the traditional lines of operation. This complexity presents an adversary with multiple, ambiguous problems that are difficult to classify, conceptualize, and counter.⁴⁰

The final characteristic of risk-confusion reflects the complex nature of gray zone conflict, which makes determining the outcome of decisions and their inherent risks more problematic. The traditional war-gaming model of action, reaction, and counter-action does not adequately account

³⁸ Freier, "Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone," ix, 3-4.

³⁹ ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 4.

⁴⁰ Freier, "Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone," 3-4.

for the interdependent problems associated with gray zone challenges.⁴¹ In many cases, both action and inaction will produce equally unfavorable outcomes, leading to a no-win situation.

The presence of these factors in interstate relations presents a challenge to the status quo and the classical concept of war and warfare. These three characteristics serve as the criteria for classifying a phenomenon as gray zone conflict. This monograph examines the potential expanded role of conventional US Army forces in gray zone conflict through historical case study of the US Army involvement in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention (Operation Power Pack.)

The research design of this monograph explores current Army and Joint doctrine and compares it to the nascent terminology of the gray zone theory of warfare to determine its applicability to the problem. These doctrinal definitions serve to describe the three characteristics of gray zone conflict within the established US Department of Defense lexicon and determine their relevancy to US Army special operations and conventional forces.

The subsequent section compares the core competencies of US Army special operations and conventional forces to the doctrinal definitions supporting gray zone conflict. This will verify which force is better suited to combat this threat and highlight areas of potential overlap in effort and/or capability. This leads to evaluation and comparison of the capabilities of conventional and special operations forces in the US Army. The XVIII Airborne Corps and Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) serve as examples for critical capability analysis. This comparison assists in determining shared mission sets, capabilities, or other commonalities that conventional forces may adopt or perform in gray zone conflict.

The case study of the Dominican Republic Intervention of 1965 serves as a historical example of conventional forces operating successfully in a gray zone conflict. Analysis of this

⁴¹ ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4-8; Freier, "Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone," 4.

operation reveals both the factors that led to success from the US Army's perspective and potential continuities relevant to the modern operational environment.

This study provides analytical support for the thesis that US Army conventional force capabilities can be applied to the complex situations that arise from gray zone conflict. The conclusion offers recommendations with applicability to the modern environment and the joint capability solutions under the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership policy and education, personnel, facility, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) construct the US Army may employ for the accomplishment of this goal.⁴² These recommendations may serve to provide proof of concept for Army planners working to prepare US Army conventional forces to contend with an enemy or adversary operating in the gray zone.

Applicability of US Doctrine to the Gray Zone

Current US doctrine describes warfare as a dichotomy between traditional and irregular qualities. This model represents the full spectrum of conflict that necessarily includes the gray zone. As described in JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*,

Traditional warfare is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states. With the increasingly rare case of formally declared war, traditional warfare typically involves force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional forces and special operations forces (SOF) against each other in all physical domains as well as the information environment (which includes cyberspace).⁴³

Traditional warfare does not meet the criteria of gray zone conflict as it portrays warfare between nation-states in open, conventional military engagement. This form of warfare more closely represents the paradigm of warfare exemplified by World War II and adopted by many nations as

⁴² Joint Staff, "Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS)," *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions*, CJCSI 3170.01I, January 23, 2015, accessed November 30, 2016, https://dap.dau.mil/policy/Documents/2015/CJCSI_3170_01I.pdf.

⁴³ JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, x.

military convention.⁴⁴ For these reasons, the doctrinal definition of traditional warfare is exclusive of the first two characteristics of gray zone conflict.

Irregular warfare represents the opposite pole of this dichotomous model. As defined in JP-1,

IW [irregular warfare] is characterized as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). In IW, a less powerful adversary seeks to disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of a more powerful military force, which usually serves that nation's established government.⁴⁵

This definition of irregular warfare is purposefully vague, but allows for the inclusion of the characteristics of gray zone conflict. In this definition, "state and non-state actors" allows for inclusion of the concept of hybridity. An adversary's ability to "disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of a more powerful military force" exemplifies a menace to defense and military convention. The final characteristic of risk-confusion is represented in the description of irregular warfare in JP 3-05, *Special Operations*,

Nonstate actors use political, psychological, and economic methods, reinforced with military-type activities that favor indirect approaches and asymmetric means. Countering these methods requires a different mindset and different capabilities than traditional warfare methods. . . . The strategic security environment is characterized by uncertainty, complexity, rapid change, and persistent conflict.⁴⁶

For these reasons, the term "irregular warfare" is the best doctrinal representation of gray zone conflict.

Under this paradigm of war, conventional forces undertake the preponderance of responsibility for traditional warfare and special operations forces bear the greatest responsibility in irregular warfare; however, the joint publication states that a "synergistic combination" of both

⁴⁴ Philip S. Meilinger, "Busting the Icon: Restoring Balance to the Influence of Clausewitz," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 1 (Fall 2007): 118, 122-24, accessed December 01, 2016, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA509169>.

⁴⁵ JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, x.

⁴⁶ JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, II-1.

types of forces in each environment produces the greatest result.⁴⁷ The following section compares and contrasts the core competencies of US Army conventional and special operations forces to reveal overlapping capabilities; this will help determine how conventional army forces may contribute more to the resolution of gray zone conflict, while maintaining their prescribed mission set.

Core Competencies and Critical Capabilities of US Army Forces

The core competencies of ARSOF exist in two categories: special warfare and surgical strike.⁴⁸ These categories further divide into nine principle missions: unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), psychological operations, civil affairs, information operations, direct action, special reconnaissance, combating terrorism, and counter proliferation.⁴⁹ Title 10 of the United States Code establishes these missions as “Special Operations Activities.”⁵⁰ JP 3-05, *Special Operations* further substantiates the role of Special Operations Forces in IW,

SOF [special operations forces] are selected, trained, and equipped to conduct all forms of IW. Special operations considers the totality of the cognitive, informational, physical, cultural, and social aspects of the operational environment to influence the local population’s behavior through unique capabilities to identify and influence relevant populations, enhance stability, prevent conflict, and when necessary, fight and defeat adversaries. SOF capabilities complement CF [conventional forces] capabilities.⁵¹

These qualities make special operations forces uniquely suited for combating irregular warfare in all aspects; however, this definition supports a complementary relationship with conventional forces that suggests co-dependency and/or overlapping capability.

⁴⁷ Ibid., I-5-7.

⁴⁸ ADRP 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), v.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1-4 - 1-5.

⁵⁰ Unified Combatant Command for Special Operations Forces, Public Law 114-328, US Code 10 (2016), §167.

⁵¹ JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, II-1.

Similarly, the core competencies of US Army conventional forces (CF) are combined arms maneuver (CAM) and wide area security (WAS).⁵² Each of these competencies exhibits different proportions of offensive, defensive, stability operations that support the assigned mission and environment.⁵³ In pursuit of the nation's goals, "Army forces conduct regular and irregular warfare against both conventional and hybrid threats."⁵⁴ In the context of irregular warfare, the capability of conventional forces to conduct stability operations is most applicable to the problems presented in gray zone conflict.

According to ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*,

Stability operations are military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the United States to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment and to provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief. They include five tasks: establish civil security, establish civil control, restore essential services, support to governance, and support to economic and infrastructure development.⁵⁵

These tasks represent a broad set of capabilities the Army may employ to restore host-nation capacity and capability. While any combination of these tasks may exist in an operational environment, perhaps the greatest overlap of special operations and conventional forces capabilities occurs in foreign internal defense (FID) missions.

As described in ADRP 3-07, *Stability*,

Foreign internal defense involves civilian and military agencies of a government participating in action programs taken by another government or other designated organization. This program aims to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security. U.S. foreign internal

⁵² "Combined arms maneuver is the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to defeat enemy ground forces; to seize, occupy, and defend land areas; and to achieve physical, temporal, and psychological advantages over the enemy to seize and exploit the initiative. It exposes enemies to friendly combat power from unexpected directions and prevents an effective enemy response. Wide area security is the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to protect populations, forces, infrastructure, and activities; to deny the enemy positions of advantage; and to consolidate gains in order to retain the initiative. Offensive, defensive, and stability operations each requires a combination of combined arms maneuver and wide area security; neither core competency is adequate in isolation." ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 5-6.

⁵³ ADP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 5.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

defense efforts involve all instruments of national power to support host-nation internal defense and development (IDAD) programs.⁵⁶

FID is a prescribed mission for ARSOF, yet it shares much in common with the tasks executed by conventional forces in stability operations. President Lyndon B. Johnson used the term “stability operations” in 1965 to describe the mission of elements of the 82nd Airborne Division (82nd), deployed to the Dominican Republic to “re-establish the peace and stability” of the country.⁵⁷

The Dominican Republic Intervention of 1965

Santo Domingo is a volcano that is going to envelop all Latin America in flames! There will not be peace until the last invader is destroyed and the last Yankee property is seized.

—Rafael Tavera, *14th of June Movement*, 1965

The Dominican Republic Intervention of 1965 serves as a useful case study to assess the performance of a conventional US Army unit deployed in a conflict exhibiting the three characteristics of the gray zone. The case study evaluates the US Army’s role in the international effort to restore peace and stability to the Dominican Republic (DOMREP) during a communist take-over of the democratically elected government.⁵⁸

Context and History

The Dominican Crisis and subsequent American intervention in 1965 occurred during the Cold War—a global competition between first and second world powers characterized by the propagation of ideologies.⁵⁹ This struggle manifested itself through propaganda, proxy wars, and other adversarial actions between Western and Eastern Bloc nations below the threshold of declared

⁵⁶ ADRP 3-07, *Stability* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-3.

⁵⁷ Lawrence A. Yates, “Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966.” *Leavenworth Papers*, no.15 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 73.

⁵⁸ Abraham J. Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 2.

⁵⁹ John A. Garraty and Peter Gay, eds., *The Columbia History of the World* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1972), 1084-85.

war.⁶⁰ In this bi-polar contest, the United States adopted a foreign policy dominated by nuclear deterrence and the containment of communism.⁶¹ These and other policies (e.g. the Charter of the Organization of American States, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Roosevelt Corollary) combined with foreign treaties and historical precedence to establish United States dominance in the affairs of the Western Hemisphere.⁶² In this context, the Dominican Republic served as a proving ground for United States foreign policy and military intervention.

The United States has a long and complicated history of involvement in the Dominican Republic that dates to the early 1900s.⁶³ For the United States, this relationship involved the integration of all instruments of national power to achieve its goals: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME). Throughout the twentieth century, the United States sought to divest the Dominican Republic of foreign influence (particularly from Germany and the other European powers), promote democratic ideals, and protect the sea lines of communication leading to the Panama Canal.⁶⁴ The relative instability of the Dominican Republic and its location in the US-Caribbean sphere of influence made it a prime target for America's foreign policy efforts.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1084.

⁶¹ US National Security Council, *NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, by James S. Lay, Jr. April, 1950, accessed January 30, 2017, <https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68.htm>.

⁶² George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 370-72.

⁶³ Ellen D. Tillman, *Dollar Diplomacy by Force: Nation-building and Resistance in the Dominican Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 1-10; Vernon T. Veggeberg, "A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency: The U.S. Military Occupation of the Dominican Republic, 1916-1924" (master's thesis, Marine Corps University, 2008), 1, accessed January 30, 2017, <http://dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a491390.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Bruce J. Calder, *Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic During the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner Publishers, 2006), 22-24.

⁶⁵ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 3, 227.

To prevent foreign intervention in the Western Hemisphere, President Theodore Roosevelt employed US Marines to enforce a levy on customs entering the Dominican Republic.⁶⁶ This action made the repayment of the Dominican Republic's debts to European powers possible and effectively established the United States as the suzerain over the Dominican Republic.⁶⁷ Subsequently, Roosevelt extended a line of credit to the Dominican Government to repay its debts in full, thereby diminishing the influence of the European powers in the Caribbean nation.⁶⁸ *The Convention of 1907 between the United States and the Dominican Republic* solidified this arrangement and promised to "grant the latter [Dominican Republic] such other assistance as the former [United States] may deem proper to restore the credit, preserve the order, increase the efficiency of the civil administration and advance the material progress and welfare of the Dominican Republic."⁶⁹ While these actions served to reduce foreign influence, it also further entwined the United States and Dominican Republic.

President Woodrow Wilson deepened this entanglement in 1914 with further measures to promote democratic ideals, build a productive economy, and facilitate the repayment of the Dominican Republic's debts to the United States.⁷⁰ Wilson also feared the increase of German influence in the Caribbean as tensions rose in the build-up to World War I.⁷¹ Between September 1913 and July 1914, a series of rebellions occurred in the Dominican Republic that validated President Wilson's concerns.⁷² The US minister in Santo Domingo managed to settle these

⁶⁶ Tillman, *Dollar Diplomacy by Force*, 1, 33-34.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 47-48.

⁶⁹ The Convention of 1907 Between the United States and the Dominican Republic, US-DR, February 8, 1907, *TS* 1, 2087.

⁷⁰ Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 22-24.

⁷¹ Veggeberg, "A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency," 2-3.

⁷² G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 45-47.

disputes, yet the US government recognized a need for further measures to ensure peace and stability in the region.⁷³ In response, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryant enacted the “Wilson Plan.”⁷⁴ This five-point plan included an ultimatum to hold a fair presidential election or have a president installed and supported by the United States.⁷⁵ The other provisions declared US administration of Dominican finances, public works, and the establishment of a national guard force under the command of the US military.⁷⁶

The military occupation of the Dominican Republic continued through the following administration of President Warren G. Harding.⁷⁷ Despite his criticism of Wilson, Harding continued many of his predecessor’s policies and introduced a counterinsurgency campaign combined with amnesty for rebels who surrendered.⁷⁸ This policy finally produced results, leading to the cessation of hostilities between the Dominican Government and rebel forces on May 31, 1922.⁷⁹ Although successful, US Marines remained in the Dominican Republic as a peacekeeping force until 1924 and as a training force until 1933.⁸⁰ President Franklin D. Roosevelt finally ordered their withdrawal under the auspices of his “Good Neighbor Policy” that espoused respect for the independence, rights, and obligations of other nations.⁸¹

An era of relative peace between the United States and the Dominican Republic lasted from 1930 to 1961.⁸² In 1930, Rafael Trujillo, a former army officer led a bloodless *coup d’état* via

⁷³ Ibid., 46.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ John M. Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 247.

⁷⁶ G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 46.

⁷⁷ Veggeberg, “A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency,” 17-18.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 13-14.

⁷⁹ Calder, *Impact of Intervention*, 177.

⁸⁰ Veggeberg, “A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency,” 15; Yates, “Power Pack,” 2.

⁸¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Inaugural Address,” *The American Presidency Project*, no. 1 (March 4, 1933), accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14473>.

⁸² Abraham F. Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to

rigged election and ruled the Dominican Republic as a dictator for the next thirty-one years.⁸³ Historians refer to this period as the “Trujillo Era.”⁸⁴ Trujillo’s reign was characterized by the relative normalization of relations between the United States and the Dominican Republic; however, this stability came at a cost to the Dominican people, who suffered a loss of human rights and freedom.⁸⁵

By mid-1960, the Trujillo dictatorship was a failing government in the eyes of the Organization of American States (OAS), who imposed taxes on Dominican sugar exports.⁸⁶ This action strengthened the resolve of anti-Trujillo partisans and disrupted the balance of power in the nation.⁸⁷ On May 30 of the following year, rebel forces assassinated Trujillo on a road outside of Santo Domingo. After the sudden, violent death of Trujillo, the nation remained calm as Trujillo’s secret police exacted revenge on the assassins and their conspirators.⁸⁸ Within hours of receiving the news, the United States positioned a naval task force in visual range of Santo Domingo—prepared to enforce peace. The order was never issued.⁸⁹

The Trujillo family attempted to hold power and appointed Trujillo’s son, Ramfis to a position of power over the Dominican Military, while the puppet President Jaochín Balaguer

Intervention,” *Caribbean Studies* 10, no. 2 (July, 1970): 34, accessed January 30, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25612211>.

⁸³ Raymond H. Pulley, “The United States and the Trujillo Dictatorship, 1933-1940: The High Price of Caribbean Stability,” *Caribbean Studies* 5, no. 3 (October, 1965): 22, accessed February 5, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25611893>; Veggeberg, “A Comprehensive Approach to Counterinsurgency,” 20.

⁸⁴ Tillman, *Dollar Diplomacy by Force*, 188.

⁸⁵ Pulley, “The United States and the Trujillo Dictatorship,” 25.

⁸⁶ Piero Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis: The 1965 Constitutionalist Revolt and American Intervention* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 29; Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention,” 34.

⁸⁷ Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention,” 34.

⁸⁸ Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 30.

⁸⁹ Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention,” 35-36.

remained in office.⁹⁰ However, the presence of the naval task force, combined with public press statements of America's pending involvement convinced the Trujillo family to relinquish control and flee the nation.⁹¹ The end of the Trujillo Era left a vacuum of power that Balaguer tenuously filled as the head of the Government, yet opposition to his rule grew as political factions splintered.⁹²

Four main political groups existed in the Dominican Republic in 1961: The Dominican Party, the National Civic Union (UCN), the 14th of June Political Group, and the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD). Each of these parties occupied a different place on the political spectrum and displayed a combination of divergent and convergent goals for the Dominican Republic.⁹³ The existence of armed military and paramilitary groups supporting the parties added to the volatility of the complex political landscape. From 1961 through 1963, a combination of labor strikes, political maneuvering, military *coups*, and foreign pressure eventually led to the establishment of the Council of State under Juan Bosch of the PRD.⁹⁴ Bosch established a constitution in 1963 that granted rights to the Dominican people, separated church and state, and redistributed land among the populace.⁹⁵ While progressive, these actions met with staunch opposition from the conservative elements in the nation. On September 25, 1963, Bosch was ousted in a *coup d'état* and replaced with a civilian *junta* styled "the Triumvirate" led by Donald Reid

⁹⁰ Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 30.

⁹¹ Tad Szulc, "U.S. Acts To Keep Dominican Curbs; Return of Trujillos Brings Shift in Stand in O.A.S.," *New York Times*, November 17, 1961; Lowenthal, "The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention," 35.

⁹² Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 50-53.

⁹³ Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 51-53.

⁹⁴ Richard A. Haggerty, ed., *Dominican Republic: A Country Study* (Washington, DC: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989), accessed February 17, 2017, <http://countrystudies.us/dominican-republic/>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Cabral of the UCN.⁹⁶ Cabral failed to establish support or legitimacy for his government.⁹⁷ In April 1965, a civil war began in the Dominican Republic between the Loyalist forces of the current government led by Donald Reid Cabral and the Constitutionalist forces of the former government led by President Juan Bosch.⁹⁸

On April 27, 1965, President Johnson ordered US forces to intervene in the crisis developing in the Dominican Republic.⁹⁹ On May 2, the president addressed the people of the United States to report on the situation and provide his justification for the employment of military force. In his speech, Johnson remarked that Communist conspirators in the Dominican Republic had taken control over a popular democratic uprising and conspired to overthrow the democratically elected government.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the United States could not permit another communist state like Cuba in the Western hemisphere.¹⁰¹ In accordance with the policy of containment and with the tenuous support of the OAS, Johnson resolved to use force to evacuate endangered American civilians, stabilize the Dominican Republic, restore order, and reinstate democracy.¹⁰²

Dominican Crisis and the Gray Zone

The situation in the Dominican Republic in April 1965 was complex and exhibited the three characteristics of gray zone conflict. Since the death of Trujillo in 1961, the Dominican

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA Pam) 550-36, *Dominican Republic and Haiti: Country Studies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 44.

⁹⁸ Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 195-96.

⁹⁹ US Army Center of Military History, *United States Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, by Lawrence M. Greenberg, CMH Pub 93-5, (Washington, DC, 1987), 18, accessed September 11, 2016, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a181823.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ Lyndon B. Johnson, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in the Dominican Republic," *The American Presidency Project*, no. 221 (May 2, 1965), accessed January 31, 2017, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26932>.

¹⁰¹ Bruce Palmer, Jr., *Intervention in the Caribbean: The Dominican Crisis of 1965* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), 19.

¹⁰² Johnson, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in the Dominican Republic."

Republic faced a series of challenges that undermined its internal stability and relationships with other nations, particularly the United States and members of the OAS.¹⁰³ Constant political turmoil wracked the nation and led to multiple *coups* and counter-*coups* that occurred from 1961-65.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the presence of a politically motivated Dominican Army and police force, armed rival militias, and the disparate motivations of its citizenry exacerbated this problem. Despite these challenges, Johnson was determined to achieve his goals in the Dominican Republic, by force if necessary.¹⁰⁵

This led to the Dominican Intervention of 1965, in which US conventional forces faced a hybrid enemy of unknown strength and capability composed of elements of various factions—each vying for supremacy.¹⁰⁶ The rebel forces of the Constitutionlists occupied large sections of the countryside and threatened the lines of communication that connected the government centers of power; yet, many Loyalist forces occupied similar areas and were virtually indistinguishable from their foes. The lack of distinction between “friendly” and “enemy” forces prompted one US Army colonel to remark, “. . . those who shoot at us are the enemy and those who don’t are friends.”¹⁰⁷ While apt, this observation is indicative of the diverse and dynamic nature of the forces at play and illustrates the hybrid nature of the threat.¹⁰⁸

The environment in the Dominican Republic evolved rapidly in the build-up to intervention and posed great menace to the established defense and military convention of the Cold War Army. While a relatively small force, the Constitutionlist rebels and their supporters boasted resources

¹⁰³ Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention,” 34.

¹⁰⁴ Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 30-159.

¹⁰⁵ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 19.

¹⁰⁶ Charles, K. Welliver, “Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations: Lebanon 1958 and Dominican Republic 1965,” Monograph (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1989), 91-92, accessed February 13, 2017, <http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA211904>.

¹⁰⁷ Yates, “Power Pack,” 102.

¹⁰⁸ Freier, “Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone,” ix, 3-4.

rivaling the Loyalist government forces and proved frustrating to conventional US capabilities.¹⁰⁹ Constitutionalist forces continually plagued the US forces with low-technology solutions and fieldcraft. For example, US signals intelligence (SIGINT) equipment designed to intercept Soviet communications proved ineffective against the cheap off-the-shelf communications devices employed by rebel forces.¹¹⁰ Major General York, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division expressed his frustration in this regard, stating, “. . . in some respects the Army is still fighting World War II. The backup required to fight an SS Division in Europe is not a good guide to use when determining the support required to fight irregular forces in stability operations.”¹¹¹

The 82nd Airborne Division formed the core of US Forces - Dominican Republic (USFORDOMREP) that executed the intervention, named “Operation Power Pack.”¹¹² This unit had trained, organized, and equipped to fight the Warsaw Pact nations in conventional warfare; as a result, it experienced significant problems adjusting to the operational environment in the Dominican Republic.¹¹³ The rapidly developing nature of the crisis caused a corresponding shortfall in planning, which resulted in hasty preparation and execution based on best practices and default planning assumptions.¹¹⁴

Intelligence estimates from April 1965 placed the rebel strength between 3,500 and 6,500 fighters and support personnel against the 22,500 soldiers of USFORDOMREP and 1,700 soldiers of the *junta*.¹¹⁵ Though smaller in numbers, the subversive nature of the rebels combined with their unwillingness to engage in direct fighting posed great menace to the traditional warfare for which

¹⁰⁹ “Concerning the rebels. . . about 1,500 were under Communist leadership, fewer than 1,000 were military regulars, and anywhere from 1,000 to 4,000 were ‘hangers-on.’” Yates, “Power Pack,” 67.

¹¹⁰ Yates, “Power Pack,” 99.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 49.

¹¹³ Yates, “Power Pack,” 98.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 55-59.

¹¹⁵ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 76; Yates, “Power Pack,” 67, 98.

the 82nd had prepared.¹¹⁶ Constitutionalist forces applied limited, focused military force in support of information operations to disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of the more powerful US forces.¹¹⁷

In the Dominican Intervention, the United States applied conventional military force against a hybrid force at great risk. Politically, Johnson incurred the ire of many in the US Congress who felt his unilateral decision to employ forces threatened US interests and violated the nation's commitment to respect sovereignty.¹¹⁸ Additionally, the OAS supported the protection of American citizens and subsequent policing of the Dominican Republic under an Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF)—not a unilateral US intervention.¹¹⁹ These disagreements among the principal actors in the conflict produced an operational environment characterized by uncertainty.

At the small unit level, many US soldiers thought they deployed to “kill commies” and exhibited strong support for the Loyalist forces.¹²⁰ Constitutionalist forces used this sentiment to drive their propaganda machine and rally support for their cause.¹²¹ Despite the reality on the ground, Johnson sought to limit the violence between Constitutionlists and Loyalists in hopes of reconciliation; Johnson, like Harding, believed this approach would produce a political outcome

¹¹⁶ Immediately prior to their deployment in DOMREP, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division completed Quick Kick VII, a joint training exercise focused on airborne insertion and amphibious operations. This exercise validated the unit as “combat ready” and helped the unit identify shortfalls in equipment and training in conventional warfare. Yates, “Power Pack,” 56.

¹¹⁷ Jose A. Ocasio and Luis C. Zorilla, “The Latin American Reaction to the United States Involvement in Latin American Affairs” (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 1989), 43-44, accessed February 16, 2017, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a209784.pdf>; Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 94-95.

¹¹⁸ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, v, 26.

¹¹⁹ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 28-29.

¹²⁰ Yates, “Power Pack,” 102.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 102, 139.

more favorable to the United States and preserve its relationship with other nations in the Western Hemisphere.¹²²

This strategic context formed an operational environment rife with risk-confusion and uncertainty for US forces. In this non-linear situation, conventional military actions and the application of force often produced results that did not support the United States' strategy.¹²³ Additionally, the asymmetric actions of the Constitutionlists presented US forces with multiple, ambiguous problems that were difficult to classify, conceptualize, and counter.¹²⁴ In Washington, Johnson wavered frequently on decisions to approve the use of force as these actions incited unrest and deepened the divide among between OAS members.¹²⁵ The combination of uncertainty among Army commanders and the vacillation of orders from Washington depict the essence of risk-confusion present in the Dominican Intervention.

These examples demonstrate the complex, ambiguous nature of gray zone conflict in the context of the Dominican Republic in April and May 1965. In this scenario, US forces engaged a hybrid force of uncertain strength and capability in an unfamiliar operational environment. The rebels presented US forces with numerous, ambiguous problems that obfuscated conventional military approaches and imposed high risk to the success of the operation.

Operation Power Pack (OPLAN 310/2-65)

Three phases distinguish the events of the 1965 Dominican Crisis: the protection and evacuation of American citizens, the unilateral intervention by the US Military, and the

¹²² Welliver, "Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations," 95; Yates, "Power Pack," 91.

¹²³ Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 94.

¹²⁴ Freier, "Outplayed: Regaining Strategic Initiative in the Gray Zone," 3-4.

¹²⁵ Kenneth L. Brownlee, "American Actions in the Dominican Republic and Grenada." Monograph (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1985), 40-41, accessed February 13, 2017. <http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA159014>; Yates, "Power Pack," 89-91; Welliver, "Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations," 95-96.

international effort to return stability to the nation under the IAPF.¹²⁶ Operation Power Pack, the second phase, began on April 29, 1965 with the activation of OPLAN 310 and ended with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)-negotiated cease-fire on May 21.¹²⁷ Within a week of commencement, USFORDOMREP amassed 22,500 soldiers, which included the majority of the 82nd Airborne Division.¹²⁸ US Army planners and leaders used this force to halt a civil war, contain an insurgency, reduce the threat of a communist take-over, and restore order and democracy to the Dominican Republic.¹²⁹ The planning, preparation, and execution of Operation Power Pack from the perspective of the 82nd Airborne Division's command and staff reveal how this conventional force achieved such ambitious and varied aims.

On April 26, 1965, the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered two battalions of the 3rd Brigade/82nd Airborne Division to defense readiness condition (DEFCON) 3 in response to the growing concerns of US Ambassador Bennett in Santo Domingo.¹³⁰ This order coincided with the execution of Blue Chip V—a joint training exercise between the 82nd and the United States Air Force (USAF).¹³¹ This competition of priorities severely limited the effort placed on planning and preparing the division ready force (DRF) for action.¹³² As a result, the brigade and division planners not engaged

¹²⁶ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 32, 36, 47.

¹²⁷ Yates, "Power Pack," 116-17; Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 32.

¹²⁸ Robert S. McNamara, Memorandum from Secretary of Defense McNamara to President Johnson, Washington, May 26, 1965, accessed February 19, 2017, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/johnsonlb/xxxii/44733.htm>; Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 76.

¹²⁹ Gerald T. Bartlett, "Foreword," in "Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966." *Leavenworth Papers*, no.15, by Lawrence A. Yates, i, (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988).

¹³⁰ Welliver, "Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations," 87; Yates, "Power Pack," 55.

¹³¹ Yates, "Power Pack," 56.

¹³² *Ibid.*

in Blue Chip V received minimal guidance and planned against assumptions in the two-year-old OPLAN 310/2L-63.¹³³

The standing plan contained in OPLAN 310/2L-63 consisted of little more than a deployment schedule, force projection numbers, and timetables that no longer reflected the force structure of the brigade.¹³⁴ A lack of credible intelligence compounded this problem and left planners guessing on the nature of the situation in DOMREP.¹³⁵ In an effort to prepare for this uncertainty, the planners of the 82nd prepared an array of contingency plans that included show of force, evacuation, cordon, and direct military intervention in the brewing civil war.¹³⁶ The dearth of intelligence reports caused planners to fill in knowledge gaps as best they could and initiate movement in anticipation of deployment.¹³⁷ This deficiency in planning, combined with the distractions of Blue Chip V directly resulted in shortfalls in preparation.

On April 28, the JCS elevated the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division to DEFCON 2 in anticipation of an execution order.¹³⁸ Preparations for the impending deployment order began immediately, but shortfalls in manning and command oversight plagued the process; the soldiers completed the Blue Chip V exercise and then immediately began preparation for Power Pack.¹³⁹ Information regarding the security of the San Isidro Airport caused 82nd planners to prepare for a combat jump and subsequent operation to seize the airfield. A shortage of qualified jumpmasters

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ In 1965, the 82nd Airborne Division's organization reflected the Reorganization Objectives Army Division (ROAD) initiative. This design improved upon the "pentomic" division structure and made it easier to deploy individual battalions in contingency operations. Yates, "Power Pack," 55.

¹³⁵ Yates, "Power Pack," 63.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 59.

¹³⁷ Yates, "Power Pack," 61, 65.

¹³⁸ Welliver, "Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations," 88; Yates, "Power Pack," 61.

¹³⁹ Yates, "Power Pack," 61.

and riggers lengthened this process, causing the 82nd to reach DEFCON 2 status mere hours before the order to launch.¹⁴⁰

The rapid escalation of events, combined with manpower and leadership shortages created an environment of disorder within the 82nd. In lieu of detailed orders, the paratroopers began preparations and aircraft load-out based on their experience from training exercises.¹⁴¹ As part of the plan, President Johnson ordered the 82nd to conduct a layover in Ramey Air Force Base (AFB), Puerto Rico as a means of diffusing tension in the crisis. Johnson presumed this action would signal impending military intervention and give rebel forces the opportunity to cease offensive action without further violence.¹⁴² The 82nd command and staff officers planned to use this opportunity to brief the paratroopers on their mission and make final preparations.¹⁴³ The layover never occurred. At approximately 1930 hours on April 29, 1965, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) ordered the 82nd DRF to action in DOMREP.¹⁴⁴ When the paratroopers boarded the C-130s at Pope AFB, many had not slept in 72 hours and most were physically exhausted.¹⁴⁵

The 82nd's plan called for an airdrop of the 1st Battalion, 505th and 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiments, but Johnson denied permission for York to commence the drop once the planes were airborne, remarking that the San Isidro Airport was assumed to be in Loyalist hands (see Figure 1).¹⁴⁶ Historian Lawrence Yates has argued that Johnson instead denied permission to drop

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 61-62.

¹⁴¹ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 37; Yates, "Power Pack," 59-62.

¹⁴² Robert F. Barry, *Power Pack, Dominican Republic, 1965-1966, Part I* (Washington, DC: Bibliogov, 2013), 24; Yates, "Power Pack," 64.

¹⁴³ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 37; Yates, "Power Pack," 64.

¹⁴⁴ Barry, *Power Pack, Dominican Republic, 1965-1966, Part I*, 11; Yates, "Power Pack," 61.

¹⁴⁵ Yates, "Power Pack," 61.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 68-69.

1,800 paratroopers because it would appear too “war-like” for a stability operation.¹⁴⁷ Instead, General York and the DRF landed unopposed at San Isidro Airport. York and his staff established their headquarters in the control tower of the San Isidro Airport and prepared for follow-on operations.¹⁴⁸ By 5:00 a.m. on April 30, the 82nd had amassed enough men and equipment to proceed.¹⁴⁹

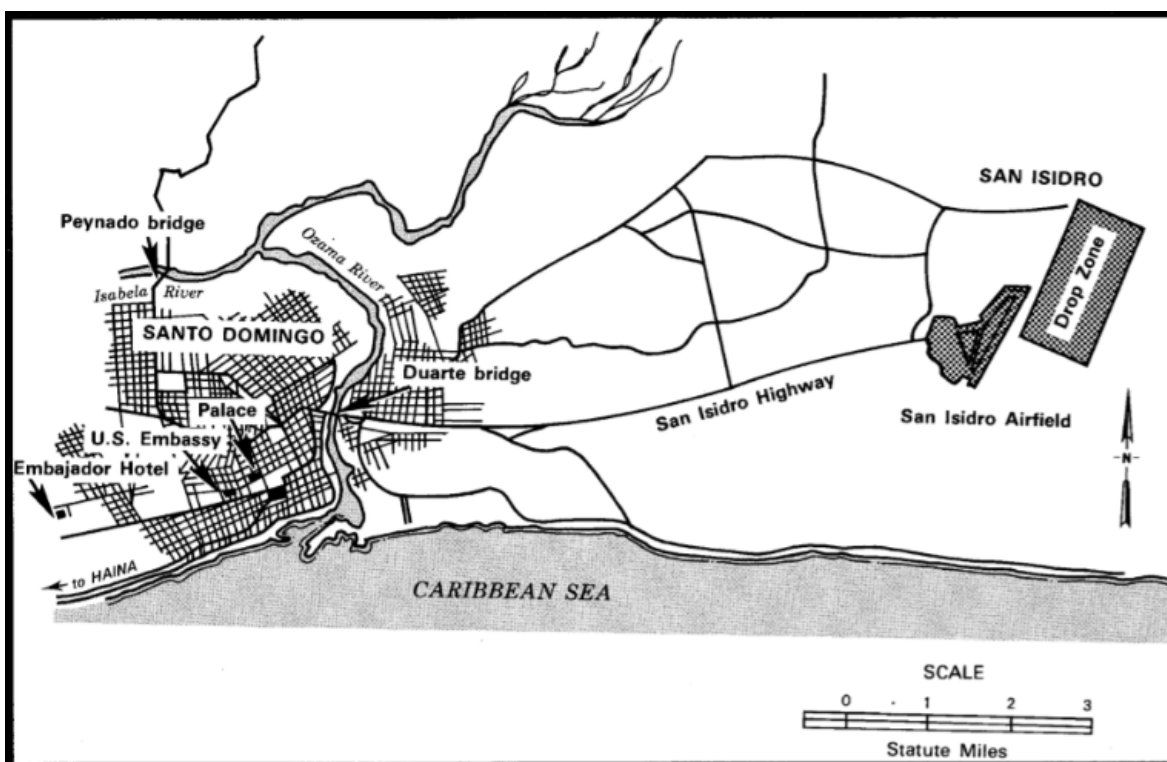


Figure 1. Map of 82nd Airborne Division area of operations. Lawrence A. Yates, “Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966,” *Leavenworth Papers*, no.15 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 68.

Ambassador Bennett wanted the 82nd to assist the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines to establish an International Security Zone (ISZ) around the capital city of Santo Domingo and decrease

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 69.

¹⁴⁸ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 38-39.

¹⁴⁹ Welliver, “Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations,” 88; Yates, “Power Pack,” 70-71.

hostility between the warring factions.¹⁵⁰ The OAS supported the establishment of the ISZ despite their objections to the overt application of American military force.¹⁵¹ General Palmer, commander of XVIII Airborne Corps and USFORDOMREP insisted the mission was neither “to maintain the status quo, . . . nor to support any particular faction or political group, but rather to establish a climate of order in which political, psychological, economic, sociological and other forces can work in a peaceful environment.”¹⁵² To achieve this, US Marines secured three objectives in Santo Domingo: the US Embassy, the Presidential Palace, and the Hotel Embajador, while the 82nd secured the eastern portion of the city, Ciudad Nueva, and the San Isidro Airport (see Figure 2).¹⁵³ The 82nd accomplished this by cutting the city in half along the Ozama River and securing key terrain and crossing points.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Yates, “Power Pack,” 74.

¹⁵¹ Welliver, “Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations,” 89.

¹⁵² US Army Center of Military History, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976*, by Andrew J. Birtle, CMH Pub 70-98-1, (Washington, DC, 2006), 214, accessed February 20, 2017, http://history.army.mil/html/books/us_army_counterinsurgency/CMH_70-98-1_US%20Army_Counterinsurgency_WQ.pdf.

¹⁵³ Welliver, “Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations,” 89; Yates, “Power Pack,” 76.

¹⁵⁴ Yates, “Power Pack,” 76.

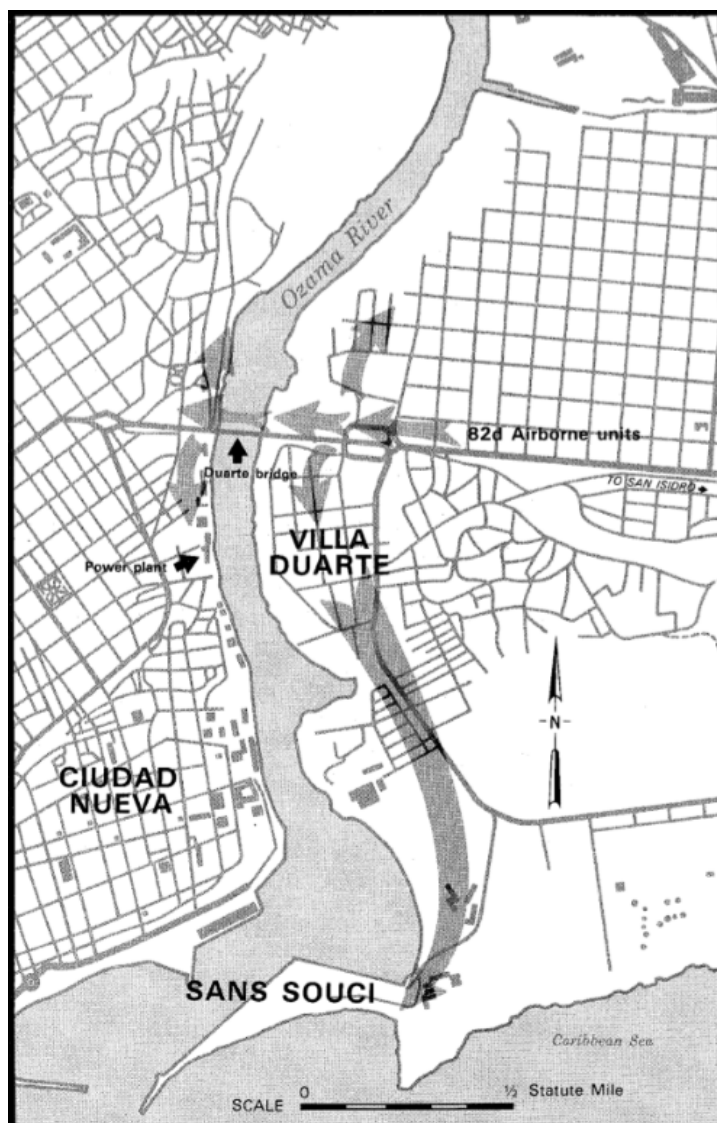


Figure 2. Map of Operation Power Pack, Villa Duarte. Lawrence A. Yates, "Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966," *Leavenworth Papers*, no.15 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 80.

The 1-505th Regiment established security for the San Isidro Airport located twenty-five kilometers east of the Ozama River and provided security for the ground lines of communication leading out of the city.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, York ordered the regiment to support the 1-508th in securing the Duarte Bridge that connected Santo Domingo to Ciudad Nueva.¹⁵⁶ The 1-505th soon

¹⁵⁵ Barry, *Power Pack, Dominican Republic, 1965-1966, Part II*, 24, 34.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

secured a beachhead on the west bank of the Ozama River and conducted a strong-point defense of the Villa Duarte power plant on the far side.¹⁵⁷

The 1-508th Regiment deployed west to seize Villa Duarte and the Duarte Bridge to establish the ISZ and stop the flow of Constitutionalist forces into Santo Domingo. Rebel forces engaged the battalion on sight and gave the 82nd its first combat casualties since World War II.¹⁵⁸ Despite sporadic fighting and withering sniper fire, the 1-508th rapidly achieved its objectives.¹⁵⁹ On May 2, the 82nd established the security zone and linked-up with the Marine forces in Santo Domingo. With the ISZ in place, the morale of Loyalist forces increased significantly, yet US forces remained committed to keeping the peace rather than taking sides.¹⁶⁰

Fighting continued through the month of May as rebel forces made a series of unsuccessful attempts to break the American lines of communication and attacked the static defensive positions that formed the ISZ.¹⁶¹ As each day passed, Loyalist forces consolidated their control of Santo Domingo and Constitutionalist forces exhausted themselves against the hardened American positions until they lost the initiative.¹⁶² While American forces held the rebels at bay, Loyalist forces continued to attack rebel positions north of the ISZ and dismantle the resistance movement.¹⁶³ As additional forces flowed into theatre, the 82nd established a corridor throughout the city that widened the gap between the rebels and the loyalists to deescalate the fighting (see Figure 3). This effort prevented direct fire contact between belligerents and allow traffic to resume

¹⁵⁷ Yates, "Power Pack," 79.

¹⁵⁸ Barry, *Power Pack, Dominican Republic, 1965-1966, Part I*, 24.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶⁰ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 46-47.

¹⁶¹ Yates, "Power Pack," 113.

¹⁶² Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 53.

¹⁶³ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 51.

in the city.¹⁶⁴ Ultimately, the implementation of the corridor prevented either side from destroying the other and facilitated the achievement of peace.¹⁶⁵

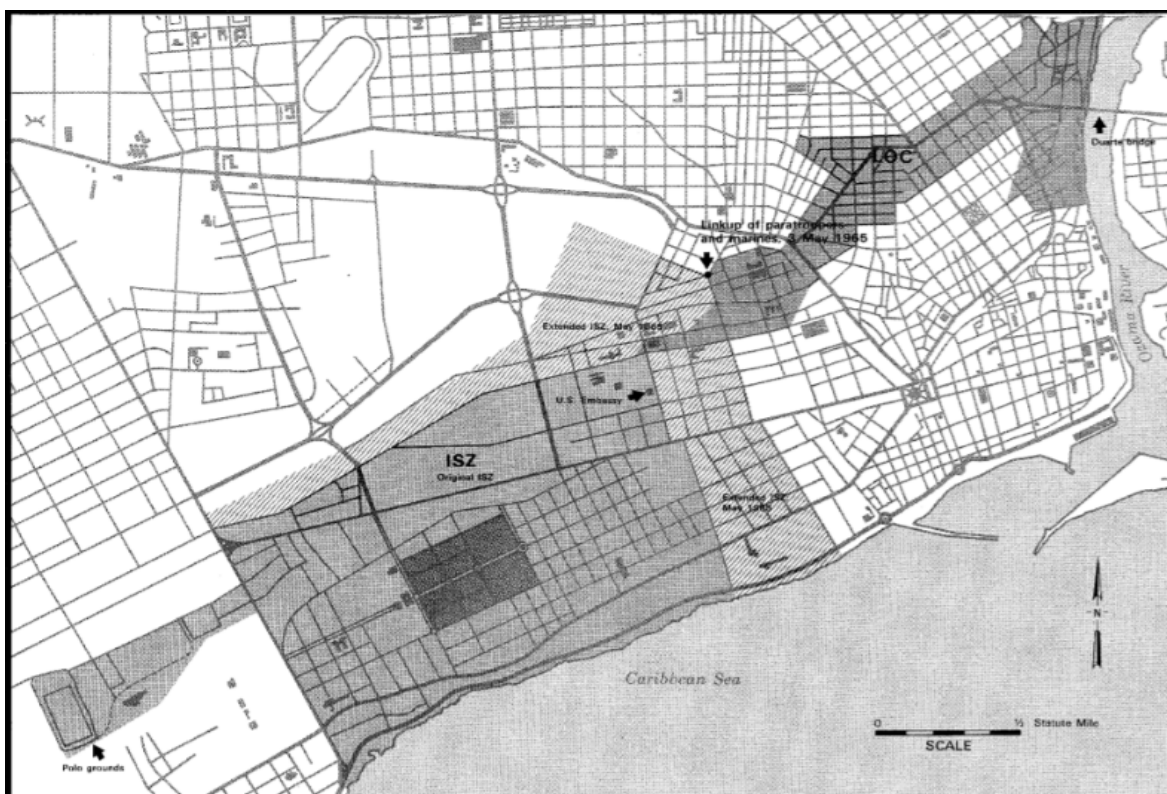


Figure 3. Map of International Security Zone and line of communication. Lawrence A. Yates, "Power Pack: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic, 1965-1966," *Leavenworth Papers*, no.15 (Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 80.

On May 5, the representatives of Loyalist and Constitutionalist forces signed the *Act of Santo Domingo* under the supervision of the OAS and the ICRC; this document served as a cease-fire agreement for the warring parties.¹⁶⁶ Intermittent fighting continued throughout the city and countryside, but eventually diminished to the point of irrelevance.¹⁶⁷ Constitutionalist forces failed to achieve a military solution to the crisis and turned to a campaign of propaganda. Loyalist forces

¹⁶⁴ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 51.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁶⁶ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 51.

¹⁶⁷ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 50.

preempted this effort on May 07, by electing the Government of National Reconstruction (GNR) under Antonio Imbert—the last surviving assassin of Trujillo.¹⁶⁸

The US Government quickly recognized the GNR as the legitimate government as loyalist forces continued to clear out the remaining resistance in Santo Domingo.¹⁶⁹ By mid-May, the fighting abated as the US forces handed the mission over to the IAPF under the leadership of Brazilian General Hugo Penasco Alvim.¹⁷⁰ Although US forces remained in country for another year, Operation Power Pack concluded on May 21, 1965 with a cease-fire agreement supported by the OAS.¹⁷¹ This success came at a cost: the US casualties for Operation Power Pack amounted to 27 combat deaths, 20 deaths from accidents, and 172 wounded.¹⁷²

Conclusion and Recommendations

Where the US interest requires it, that is where the Army belongs, and so far as I am concerned, that's where I am going to recommend that it go. That's our job.

—Harold K. Johnson, *CJCS*, 1965

Operation Power Pack was a qualified success. Despite setbacks and shortcomings in planning, preparation, and execution, the 1965 Dominican Intervention serves as proof of concept for the successful deployment of US Army conventional forces in a gray zone conflict. In a period of one month, US forces rapidly deployed, developed an understanding of a complex situation, and formed a solution that achieved the desired strategic endstate. Although the ambiguous and rapidly developing nature of the conflict caused confusion, US Army conventional forces exercised their

¹⁶⁸ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 51-52.

¹⁶⁹ Greenberg, *US Army Unilateral and Coalition Operations in the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention*, 50-51.

¹⁷⁰ Palmer, *Intervention in the Caribbean*, 73.

¹⁷¹ Yates, "Power Pack," 116-17.

¹⁷² Welliver, "Strategic Analysis of Two Joint Contingency Operations," 90; Yates, "Power Pack," 176.

core competencies and applied their conventional capabilities to maintain relevance in this type of warfare.

In present doctrinal terms, the 1965 Dominican Republic Intervention is an example of irregular warfare and neatly fits the definition in JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* as a “violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population. . . [in which] a less powerful adversary seeks to disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of a more powerful military force, which usually serves that nation’s established government.”¹⁷³ Under this classification in the traditional/irregular warfare dichotomy and Title 10, USC, the 1965 Dominican Intervention is a mission for SOF; yet US Army conventional forces proved capable of achieving the desired result.¹⁷⁴ In this example, two factors made US Army conventional forces more desirable than SOF: a lack of reaction time and required force ratio.

In the six-phase model of joint operations, SOF is most effective when they have “had enough time (months to years) to conduct pre-crisis activities, build relationships, and build HN [host nation]/PN [partnered nation] SOF capacity as part of shaping operations (Phase 0) of theater campaign and contingency plans.”¹⁷⁵ In April, 1965, the time to conduct shaping operations was not available. The Dominican Crisis evolved rapidly to the point of intervention and resisted all efforts to shape the environment (phase 0) or deter aggression altogether (phase 1)—diminishing SOF’s relevance and the effect of its capabilities in this situation. Conversely, US Army conventional

¹⁷³ JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, x.

¹⁷⁴ Unified Combatant Command for Special Operations Forces, Public Law 114-328, US Code 10 (2016), §167.

¹⁷⁵ “Although the commander will determine the number and actual phases used during a campaign or operation, use of the phases [shape, deter, seize the initiative, dominate, stability, and enable civil authority] provides a flexible model to arrange combat and stability operations.” JP 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), xxiii-xxiv, III-39; JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, I-4.

forces were uniquely capable of rapid deployment and achieving the mass required to seize the initiative (phase 2), dominate the enemy (phase 3), and stabilize the situation (phase 4).

The expeditionary capability of the US Army, particularly the 82nd Airborne Division, combined with extensive basing in the Caribbean allowed the CJCS to deploy forces rapidly and preserve the sustainment principle of endurance.¹⁷⁶ In one week, the commander of USFORDOMREP amassed a division-sized element in the Dominican Republic before the situation devolved into chaos. This allowed US conventional forces to deter further violence and avoid a direct combat role that might increase tension between the warring factions. The sheer size of the deployed force signaled the US commitment to peace and provided the Commander of USFORDOMREP with the necessary capabilities and mass to maintain options and achieve the nation's goals. The 82nd official after action report of the operation asserts that the Division could have easily destroyed the Constitutionalist forces if the situation evolved to traditional warfare and it was deemed politically necessary.¹⁷⁷

The political nature of the Dominican Intervention resulted in an operational environment characterized by uncertainty; despite this, US forces exhibited remarkable flexibility in planning and adaptation during execution. Although the Army planners and leaders suffered from an initial lack of intelligence and understanding of the environment, they quickly developed plans and adjusted to meet the emergent needs of the force. While US forces performed well and accomplished the mission, this case study elucidates systemic problems in planning and preparation that demonstrate the need for improvement in several areas.

While operational plans provide a framework for contingency operations, they do not accurately reflect the complexity of emergent situations. OPLAN 310/2-65 provided deployment timetables and force allocations that allowed the 82nd to deploy rapidly, but did not account for the

¹⁷⁶ ADRP 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-2.

¹⁷⁷ Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1942-1976*, 213.

intricacies of the developing situation. Intelligence reports and subject matter expertise are essential to the planning process and must be developed and maintained prior to execution of an operation. While SOF may not have been the best choice for action in the Dominican Intervention, their critical capabilities complement those of conventional forces—forming a synergistic effect with the potential to reduce shortfalls in planning. As described in Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations*,

Longer term preparations for SO [Special Operations] provide options for decision makers in times of crisis that would otherwise not be available. Also, pre-crisis SO preparations may provide situational awareness that permits identification of a potential crisis prior to requiring a US military response, thus allowing a whole-of-government solution be applied to de-escalate the situation by dissuading, deterring, or disrupting the parties involved or through mediation.¹⁷⁸

This solution is already in place; however, the recent development of Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) in support of Geographic Combatant Commands (GCC) has the potential to strengthen this relationship and eliminate the capability gap.¹⁷⁹

Under the RAF construct, units train, organize, and equip to execute operations specific to an assigned region. Brigade-level units rotate in and out of GCC areas of responsibility and a higher regional headquarters maintain a habitual relationship and proficiency in the area. This concept enables the development of subject matter expertise (in conjunction with SOF) and the continual assessment of requirements and potential solutions within the operational environment. Additionally, persistent presence and tacit knowledge of a region helps RAF units develop leaders and planners who are more informed and able to exercise mission command more effectively.

¹⁷⁸ JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, I-4.

¹⁷⁹ Gregory L. Cantwell, et al, “Regionally Aligned Forces: Concept Viability and Implementation,” *Carlisle Compendia of Collaborative Research* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2015), 4, accessed March 05, 2017, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/carlislecompendia/Issues/mar2015/full.pdf>.

While the RAF concept is not a solution in itself, it provides a framework that facilitates the incorporation of these lessons. Should the United States commit conventional forces to a gray zone conflict under the RAF concept, these forces will be apt to have greater contextual understanding of the environment and a better appreciation for the requirements of the operation. These factors, combined with the current size and expeditionary capabilities of the force provide a viable model for the application of US Army conventional forces in gray zone conflict.

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